

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 6577

CARACAS FOR DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, CO
SUBJ: NARCOTICS: QUARTERLY REPORT, APRIL-JUNE 1977

SUMMARY: MISSION ACTIVITY WAS IN A HIATUS FOR MUCH OF THE PERIOD AWAITING RESOLUTION OF QUESTIONS REGARDING U.S. NARCOTICS POLICY IN COLOMBIA. THE ISSUES WERE RESOLVED DURING THE VISITS OF MRS. CARTER, DR. BOURNE, AND MS. FALCO IN JUNE. NEGOTIATIONS OF THE HELICOL CONTRACT RESUMED IMMEDIATELY AND PROCEEDED SMOOTHLY. IN A RAPID RESPONSE TO A REQUEST BY PRESIDENT LOPEZ, THE DECISION WAS REACHED TO PROVIDE THE GOC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON MARIJUANA ERADICATION. DURING THE QUARTER, INTELLIGENCE INDICATED THE CULTIVATION OF OPIUM POPPIES IN COUNTRY AND THE LOCAL PRODUCTION OF HEROIN, WHILE SENSATIONAL MARIJUANA INCIDENTS RECEIVED WIDE-SPREAD COVERAGE BY THE MEDIA. END

1. ABUSE. NO SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.

2. PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING. THERE IS GROWING EVIDENCE THAT OPIUM POPPIES ARE BEING CULTIVATED IN COLOMBIA. REPORTS ORIGINATING WITHIN COUNTRY SEEM TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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CORROBORATED BY INFORMATION THAT MEXICAN HEROIN PRODUCERS, THEIR ACTIVITIES DISRUPTED BY THE ERADICATION PROGRAM IN MEXICO, ARE PLANTING EXPERIMENTAL FIELDS IN COLOMBIA. THERE ARE OTHER INDICATIONS THAT OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION AND HEROIN PRODUCTION--AT LEAST ON A LIMITED BASIS--HAVE BEEN TAKING PLACE OVER A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME. THE AMOUNT OF HEROIN PRODUCED AND ITS EXACT ORIGIN ARE NOT YET KNOWN.

3. TRAFFICKING TRENDS. NO SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.

4. ENFORCEMENT. ACTIVITY WAS SLACK THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD WITH LIMITED COCAINE SEIZURES (EXACT FIGURES ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE). ONE MAJOR COCAINE LABORATORY WAS SEIZED. NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, PARTICULARLY IN MARIJUANA, RECEIVED EXCEPTIONALLY HEAVY MEDIA COVERAGE. THE OFFICIAL DISCOVERY OF EXTENSIVE MARIJUANA FIELDS IN THE GUAJIRA, THE ACCIDENTAL CAPTURE OF A COLOMBIAN MARIJUANA PLANE IN KANSAS AND THE RE-APPEARANCE OF PART OF ITS CREW IN COLOMBIA WITH A LURID TALE OF HAVING BEEN HIJACKED, AND SENSATIONAL CASES OF CRASHED MARIJUANA PLANES IN-COUNTRY WITH SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL RESCUES OF CRASH VICTIMS BY FELLOW TRAFFICKERS CAUGHT PUBLIC ATTENTION AND FORCED ADDITIONAL OFFICIAL ATTENTION TO THE GROWING PROBLEMS.

5. TREATMENT, EDUCATION, REHABILITATION. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DANGEROUS DRUGS (NCDD) SPONSORED AREA SEMINARS IN BARRANQUILLA AND CALI DURING THE LAST WEEK OF APRIL AND THE FIRST WEEK OF MAY. THIS NCDD INITIATIVE CAME TO A TRAGIC END IN CALI WHEN A JUDGE PARTICIPATING IN THE SEMINAR WAS MURDERED (PRESUMABLY BY TRAFFICKERS) AND THE REMAINDER OF THE SEMINAR WAS CANCELLED OUT OF RESPECT FOR THE DECEASED AND IN THE FACE OF FURTHER THREATS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THE SEMINAR. THE JOINT USIS-GOC FILM ON DRUGS, "UN VIAJE",
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IS UNDERGOING CUTS BEFORE THE MAKING OF 35 MILLIMETER PRINTS FOR DISTRIBUTION IN COMMERCIAL THEATERS.

6. TRAINING. USAID/C NARCOTICS ADVISOR MEL HOLGUIN CONDUCTED TWO THREE-HOUR SESSIONS OF ORIENTATION TRAINING FOR CUSTOMS OFFICIALS.

7. REGIONAL COOPERATION. NO SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.

8. MISSION AND HOST GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES: A. MRS. ROSALYNN CARTER DISCUSSED NARCOTICS MATTERS WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ DURING HER VISIT TO COLOMBIA, JUNE 9-10. SHE COMMUNICATED THE GRAVITY WITH WHICH THE U.S. REGARDS NARCOTICS PROBLEMS AND INFORMED PRESIDENT LOPEZ OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UPCOMING VISIT OF DR. PETER BOURNE AND MS. MATHEA FALCO. THE JUNE 22 MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND DR. BOURNE AND MS. VALCO WAS CORDIAL AND BROUGHT ASSURANCES ON BOTH SIDES OF INCREASED COOPERATION IN JOINT NARCOTICS CONTROL EFFORTS. THE US REPRESENTATIVES PROPOSED CREATION OF A JOINT COMMISSION AT THE FOREIGN MINISTER-SECRETARY OF STATE LEVEL TO COORDINATE DRUG CONTROL EFFORTS AND TO EXCHANGE INTELLIGENCE. PRESIDENT LOPEZ AGREED TO EXPLORE THE PROPOSAL AND ADDED THAT HE WOULD

CONSIDER APPOINTING A LEGAL ATTACHE SPECIFICALLY FOR LIAISON IN NARCOTICS MATTERS. THE PROBLEM OF CORRUPTION IN THE GOC HAMPERING NARCOTICS EFFORTS WAS DISCUSSED AND IT WAS AGREED THAT PRESIDENT LOPEZ WOULD RECEIVE A PRIVATE BRIEFING ON THE SUBJECT BY WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

B. FOLLOWING THE REPORT ON THE MEETING BY DR. BOURNE AND MS. FALCO, PRESIDENT CARTER AUTHORIZED THE DELIVERY OF THE THREE HELICOPTERS FOR THE AIR SUPPORT UNIT. NEGOTIATIONS ON THE HELICOL CONTRACT FOR OPERATIONAL SERVICES AND MAINTENANCE RESUMED IMMEDIATELY IN BOGOTA AND MOVED AHEAD SMOOTHLY. COMPROMISE SOLUTIONS FOR THE PROBLEMS OF LIABILITY INSURANCE AND THE SIGNATORIES TO THE HELICOL CONTRACT HAVE REMOVED THE MAJOR OBSTACLES THAT BLOCKED PREVIOUS AGREEMENT. CONFIDENTIAL

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C. ALSO, AS A RESULT OF THE BOURNE/FALCO MEETING, PRESIDENT LOPEZ ON JUNE 28 SENT A REQUEST THROUGH THE COLOMBIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON FOR ASSISTANCE WITH REGARD TO THE MOST ECONOMICAL AND RAPID PROCEDURES FOR ERADICATING MARIJUANA FIELDS IN THE GUAJIRA. IN A RAPID RESPONSE, IT WAS AGREED TO SEND CAESAR BERNAL AND JOHN FORD FROM MEXICO CITY TO CONSULT WITH THE COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES BEGINNING JULY 4.

9. ARRESTS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN CITIZENS IN COLOMBIAN JAILS ON DRUG CONNECTED CHARGES AT THE END OF THE QUARTER STOOD AT 65, UP 5 FROM THE END OF THE PRECEDING QUARTER. THIS WAS A VERY TEMPORARY INCREASE, HOWEVER, AS SEVERAL PERSONS WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN THE LATTER PART OF JUNE WERE RELEASED SHORTLY AFTER THE BEGINNING OF JULY. DREXLER

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